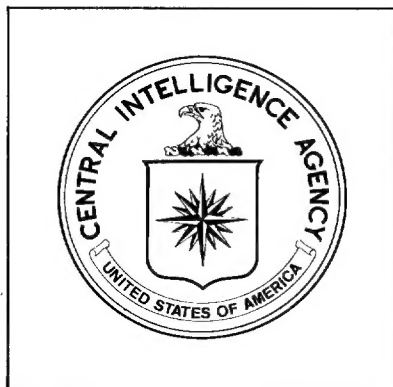


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Soviets Keep Mum on Kissinger Mission

The Soviet press has said little about Secretary Kissinger's latest round of shuttle diplomacy. Soviet diplomats also appear to be keeping their own counsel.

What little the Soviets have printed tends to minimize the significance of any new disengagement agreement and reiterates their stock theme that any agreement should be an integral part of an overall Middle East settlement. *Pravda* on Sunday, for example, belittled the Secretary's "tenth mission" to the Middle East and said it had only limited objectives.

The absence of direct comment reflects Moscow's ambivalence on the Secretary's trip. On the one hand, Moscow may view a new agreement as a positive factor that reduces the risk for war. It also may think an agreement will increase the prospects for the Geneva conference. In addition, Moscow probably thinks direct criticism would damage its relationship with the US in a situation where Soviet influence on the outcome is limited. On the other hand, the Soviets dislike Washington's dominance of the diplomatic process.

Soviet propaganda broadcasts to the Arabs have been less restrained and seem designed to limit US ability to gain points from an agreement. The Soviet broadcasts have said that Syrian and Palestinian interests will be ignored by a new agreement and have stressed that the US will grant Israel substantial new aid to reach an accord. The Soviets, however, have generally avoided direct attacks on the US.

Moscow has not been as charitable with Egypt. The Soviets have chided Cairo for falling into the

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"snare" of separate agreements and have questioned the political concessions Egypt must make to regain territory.

The broadcasts have indicated Soviet uneasiness with the possibility that US technicians will be stationed in the Sinai. One radio commentary charged that the technicians will serve Israeli interests and expressed misgivings that they will not be operating under UN supervision. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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